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12 November 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Possible New Communist Artillery Capabilities  
in North Laos

1. Attached is a set of papers recounting an unwelcome new development of which I wanted to be sure you were aware, namely indications that the Communists may have as many as sixteen 130mm field guns en route to north Laos. Our comparative data tables show that these 130mm guns fire a 100-110 lb. round at a range up to 26,700 meters. The 155mm howitzer, as you know, fires a roughly comparable round at a range of up to (only) 14,630 meters. Hence, the 130mm field gun outranges the 155mm howitzer by more than 10,000 meters.

2. Our immediate inference is that these 130mm field guns are being brought in for use against friendly [ ] fire support bases in the PDJ area. If the Communists ever get these new field pieces set up and in action, they will be able to shell even 155mm-equipped fire support bases from well beyond the range of effective counter battery fire and probably thus make those FSBs untenable. We, therefore, regard the signs that these 130mm field guns may soon be deployed in north Laos as very serious.

3. I would suggest Vientiane be immediately apprised by cable of the attached information to be sure [ ] knows what we know. In my view, a maximum effort should be devoted to fixing the locations of these guns and their ammunition while they are still en route to the battle area and destroying as many of them as possible by air before the Communists can deploy them for combat use. We may also want

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to review and re-stress our needs for standby air support with the Air Force, since if any of these new (to Laos) guns ever open up on friendly positions, immediate air strikes will probably be the only effective counter to them.

George A. Carver, Jr.  
Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

Attachments

Copy No. 1 - DDCI/ER  
Copy No. 2 - C/FE  
Copy No. 3 - C/FE/ ☐  
Copy No. 4 - SAVA *VAS/RAC*  
Copy No. 5 - SAVA *GAC Chrono*

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